

Veterans Education Newsletter

FOR SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIALS

St. Louis RPO (www.varostlouis.com)

Department of Veterans Affairs

November 2000

NEW LAW BEEFS UP MONTGOMERY GI BILL

The new Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000 makes some important changes to the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) and other VA education benefits. The law:



- ❖ Provides a substantial increase in monthly payments for eligible veterans under the MGIB (Chapter 30) and for eligible family members under the Dependents' Educational Assistance (Chapter 35) effective November 1, 2000.
- ❖ Gives some veterans who previously missed out on the GI Bill another chance to become eligible, including some VEAP beneficiaries (VEAP is the Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program)
- ❖ Allows active duty members to increase their total MGIB benefit by making contributions (this provision effective on May 1, 2001)
- ❖ Allows payments under MGIB, VEAP, and DEA for a whole new type of program: tests for licensing and certification needed to enter, maintain, or advance into employment in certain civilian occupations (this provision effective on March 1, 2001)
- ❖ Allows children eligible for DEA to choose appropriate beginning date
- ❖ Allows payment of DEA to some spouses and children from an earlier date
- ❖ Allows payments to eligible children under DEA for preparation courses for college and graduate school entrance exams (these benefits are already available to MGIB beneficiaries)
- ❖ Extends allowable length of some school breaks for payment of VA education benefits to eight weeks (The former maximum length of a break that qualified for payment was a calendar month.)

More detailed information on the various changes are available on the Education Service web site at www.gibill.va.gov.

Army ROTC Green to Gold Scholarship Program

The Army Green to Gold scholarship program is available to quality enlisted soldiers with officer potential who have served at least two years on active duty. These soldiers are allowed to **voluntarily request a discharge from active duty**; and enroll in Army ROTC. They earn a bachelor's degree and a commission as a second lieutenant. The Army won't allow the soldier to remain on active duty even if the soldier asks for that.

Consequently, individuals in the Green to Gold scholarship program aren't on active duty. If they have earned MGIB while on active duty they may receive the scholarship money and MGIB benefits for the same courses. **There is never a prohibition for these students.** In fact, the Army tries to recruit recently discharged enlisted people back into the Army by telling them they can get both the Green to Gold scholarship and the MGIB at the same time. The Army is correct in telling them this.

St. Louis Offers Alternative to Phone Call for Resolving Problem Cases

Many school officials are finding it frustrating trying to call us in an attempt to resolve problem cases for students. Did you know you could e-mail



St. Louis (stlrpo@vba.va.gov) to resolve these **problem** cases? If you do, be sure to provide

the information we need in order to respond to your inquiry quickly and accurately.

- Name of claimant.
- Social Security Number or Claim Number.
- Information reported on the 22-1999 or 22-1999b.
- Provide tuition and fees if serviceperson or veteran is less than ½-time.
- Type in your question or your problem.
- Your name, title, e-mail address, and the telephone number where you can be reached.

To make it easy to identify your inquiry and insure priority treatment please contact your Education Liaison Representative for the proper statement to include in the e-mail subject line. We will make every effort to respond to your inquiry with 24 hours.

Please remember to use this method only for problem cases where the student has not received payment. Do not use this method to ask general information questions, to request forms, remaining entitlement or general eligibility questions.

Education Benefit Rates Increase

A 3 percent cost of living (COLA) rate increase became effective 10-1-00 for chapters 30, 31 and 1606. These cost of living increases will show up on payments 11-1-00.

The new Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000 also increased benefits for chapter 35 and provided an additional increase for chapter 30 students effective 11-1-00. These increases will show up on checks beginning 12-1-00. The new rates tables for all programs are attached to this newsletter.

Problems, Problems, Problems

Equipment problems, programming problems and phone system problems have all contributed to delays in processing claims and flooded our office with phone calls this fall.

Some of the problems we have experienced include problems with the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) not

properly transferring data to the RPOs. The scanning system that processes incoming documents erroneously marked some incoming enrollments as finished rather than forwarding them to claims processors. Six thousand letters erroneously sent to MGIB-SR students saying benefits would be discontinued because they do not have a high school diploma. *(Note: Students who received this letter should contact the RPO so we can be sure benefits are not discontinued).*

All these problems resulted in increased phone traffic that we have not been able to handle. Many trying to reach us by phone are getting nothing but a busy signal and when they do finally get through, have unacceptably long waits to talk to some one.

We understand the students need for their benefits and we are doing everything possible to reduce backlogs. Employees with claims processing experience but who now work in other areas have been shifted back to claims processing to assist in the processing of claims. Employees are working overtime. Programmers and contractors are working to resolve computer problems we have been experiencing.

You can help us!!

You can help us by not sending duplicate enrollments. If a students claim has not been processed, use e-mail to notify us of the problem. Do not fax or retransmit an enrollment certificate unless an employee of St. Louis tells you to do so. Use VACERT. Electronic certifications are run through a computer for automated processing. Every claim that can be process using automation helps reduce our backlog.

We can help you!!

If you have questions about the certification process, need help with complicated certification issues or have questions about VA education programs please contact your Education Liaison Representative (ELR) for assistance. To find the ELR for your state visit our web site at <http://www.varostlouis.com/elrmap.htm>.

Use VACERT

Updated Education Rate Tables

The educational assistance allowance for programs under 38 U.S.C. chapter 31 and 10 U.S.C. chapter 1606 increased 3 percent effective October 1, 2000. Rates of payment under 38 U.S.C. chapter 30 and 35 (Dependents Education) were increased by the Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000 effective 11-1-00.

The following tables show the rates payable as a result of the increases.

CHAPTER 30 (MONTGOMERY GI BILL-ACTIVE DUTY) MONTHLY RATES FOR PERSONS WITH 3 OR MORE YEARS ACTIVE DUTY OR 2X4 PARTICIPANTS

TYPE OF TRAINING	FULL TIME	THREE-QUARTER TIME	ONE-HALF TIME
INSTITUTIONAL	\$650.00	\$487.50	\$325.00
LESS THAN HALF-TIME	Tuition and Fees, Not to Exceed the Rate of \$325.00 For Less Than Half-Time But More Than One-Quarter Time and \$162.50 For One-Quarter Time		
CORRESPONDENCE	Entitlement Charged At The Rate Of One Month For Each \$650.00 Paid		
APPRENTICESHIP ON-THE-JOB TRAINING	First Six Months	\$487.50	
	Second Six Months	\$357.50	
	Remainder Of The Program	\$227.50	
FLIGHT	Entitlement Charged At The Rate Of One Month For Each \$650.00 Paid		

CHAPTER 30 RATES FOR PERSONS WHOSE INITIAL ACTIVE DUTY OBLIGATION WAS LESS THAN THREE YEARS, AND WHO SERVED LESS THAN THREE YEARS

TYPE OF TRAINING	FULL TIME	THREE-QUARTER TIME	ONE-HALF TIME
INSTITUTIONAL	\$528.00	\$396.00	\$264.00
LESS THAN HALF-TIME	Tuition and Fees, Not to Exceed the Rate of \$264.00 For Less Than Half-Time But More Than One-Quarter Time and \$132.00 For One-Quarter Time		
CORRESPONDENCE	Entitlement Charged At The Rate Of One Month For Each \$528.00 Paid		
APPRENTICESHIP ON-THE-JOB TRAINING	First Six Months	\$396.00	
	Second Six Months	\$290.40	
	Remainder Of The Program	\$184.80	
FLIGHT	Entitlement Charged At The Rate Of One Month For Each \$528.00 Paid		

CHAPTER 30 INSTITUTIONAL RATES FOR PERSONS WITH REMAINING ENTITLEMENT UNDER CHAPTER 34 OF TITLE 38, U.S.C.

TRAINING TIME	NO DEPENDENTS	ONE DEPENDENT	TWO DEPENDENTS	EACH ADDITIONAL DEPENDENT
FULL	\$838.00	\$874.00	\$905.00	\$16.00
THREE-QUARTER	\$629.00	\$655.50	\$679.00	\$12.00
ONE-HALF	\$419.00	\$437.00	\$452.50	\$8.50
LESS THAN ONE-HALF BUT MORE THAN ONE-QUARTER	TUITION AND FEES, NOT TO EXCEED THE RATE OF \$419.00			
ONE-QUARTER	TUITION AND FEES, NOT TO EXCEED THE RATE OF \$209.50			

CHAPTER 30 JOB TRAINING RATES FOR PERSONS WITH REMAINING ENTITLEMENT UNDER CHAPTER 34 OF TITLE 38, U.S.C.

TIME	NO DEPENDENTS	ONE DEPENDENT	TWO DEPENDENTS	EACH ADDITIONAL DEPENDENT
FIRST SIX MONTHS	\$590.25	\$602.63	\$613.50	\$5.25
SECOND SIX MONTHS	\$413.88	\$423.23	\$430.93	\$3.85
THIRD SIX MONTHS	\$251.30	\$257.43	\$262.15	\$2.45
REMAINDER OF THE PROGRAM	\$239.40	\$245.18	\$250.43	\$2.45

**EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS TRAINING UNDER
CHAPTER 1606 OF TITLE 10, U.S.C. (Montgomery GI Bill-Selective Reserve)**

TYPE OF TRAINING	TRAINING TIME			
	FULL	THREE-QUARTER	ONE-HALF	LESS THAN ONE-HALF
INSTITUTIONAL	\$263.00	\$197.00	\$131.00	\$65.75
COOPERATIVE	\$263.00			
CORRESPONDENCE	55% of total charges. (Entitlement is charged at the rate of one month for each \$263.00 paid.)			
APPRENTICESHIP/ ON-THE-JOB TRAINING	First 6 Months		\$197.25	
	Second 6 Months		\$144.65	
	Remainder of Program		\$92.05	
FLIGHT	60% of total charges. (Entitlement is charged at the rate of one month for each \$263.00 paid.)			
INDEPENDENT STUDY	Independent study training is payable at the institutional rate for the same number of hours.			

CHAPTER 31 VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

TRAINING TIME	NO DEPENDENTS	ONE DEPENDENT	TWO DEPENDENTS	EACH ADDITIONAL DEPENDENT
FULL	\$433.06	\$537.19	\$633.04	\$46.14
THREE-QUARTER	\$325.41	\$403.49	\$473.29	\$35.48
ONE-HALF	\$217.73	\$269.77	\$317.11	\$23.67
LESS THAN ONE-HALF	No subsistence allowance payable			
APPRENTICESHIP/OJT	\$378.65	\$457.91	\$527.72	\$34.32

**Educational Assistance Allowance for Individuals Training Under 38 U.S.C. Chapter 35
(Dependents Educational Assistance)**

TYPE OF TRAINING	TRAINING TIME			
	FULL	THREE-QUARTER	ONE-HALF	LESS THAN ONE-HALF
INSTITUTIONAL	\$588.00	\$441.00	\$294.00	Tuition & Fees not to exceed \$294.00 or \$147 if ¼ time student
FARMCOOPERATIVE	475.00	\$356.00	\$238.00	NA
CORRESPONDENCE (Spouse only)	55% of established charges. (Entitlement is charged at the rate of one month for each \$588.00 paid.)			
APPRENTICESHIP/ ON-THE-JOB TRAINING	First 6 Months		\$428.00	
	Second 6 Months		\$320.00	
	Third 6 Months		\$212.00	
	Remainder of Program		\$ 107.00	